

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2173
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 12643

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, ET, LY, SU
SUBJ: SUDANESE CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE RAIDS FROM ETHIOPIA

REF: A. KHARTOUM 3819, B. KHARTOUM 3827

SUMMARY: ETHIOPIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ISSUED
DEC. 28 STATEMENT EXPRESSING "COMPLETE SURPRISE" AT
PRESIDENT NIMEIRI'S SUNDAY SPEECH IN GEDAREF. MOFA STATEMENT
COUNTERCHARGED NIMEIRI REMARKS DESIGNED SOLELY TO DISTRACT
ATTENTION FROM ERITREAN SECESSIONIST ELEMENTS AND OTHER
COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY GROUPS OPERATING FROM SUDANESE TERRITORY.
MOFA SPOKESMAN ADDED SUCH OPERATIONS HAD RECENTLY
BEEN MORE FREQUENT AND SERIOUS BUT EPMG, "IN INTEREST OF
GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTIRES." HAS HOPED TO RESOLVE
DIFFICULTY THROUGH DIPLOMATIC RATHER THAN PUBLIC CHANNELS.
EMBOFF HAS LEARNED FROM LOCAL UN HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
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ON REFUGEES (UNHCR) THAT UN SUPPORT TO ANSAR CAMPS IN
ILLUBABOR PROVINCE ALONG SUDAN BORDER LIKELY TO CEASE
BY END OF JANUARY. ALTHOUGH POSSIBILITY OF ANSAR ATTACKS
ORIGINATING FROM ETHIOPIAN SOIL CANNOT BE EXCLUDED,
DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES WITHIN ETHIOPIA CURRENTLY
OCCUPYING OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF EPMG MILITARY RESOURCES.

CONCERN OVER LIBYAN-ETHIOPIAN COLLUSION
AGAINST SUDAN APPEARS EXAGGERATED ACCORDING TO SOME
RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCES HERE IN ADDIS. END SUMMARY.

1. DEC. 29 ETHIOPIAN HERALD CARRIED FRONT-PAGE STATEMENT
BY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MOFA) WHICH EXPRESSED
"COMPLETE SURPRISE" AT PRESIDENT NIMIRI'S
DEC. 26 SPEECH AT GEDAREF. ARTICLE TOOK NOTE OF ALLEGATION
THAT LIBYAN AND COMMUNIST FORCES WERE ORGANIZING
DISSIDENT GROUPS IN ETHIOPIA TO ATTACK SUDAN. TONE OF
STATEMENT FIRM WITHOUT BEING BELLIGERENT. MOFA SPOKESMAN
QUOTED AS STATING "IF PRESIDENT OF GOS HAD SAID WHAT
WAS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM, EPMG COULD BUT ASK THE PURPOSE
OF THIS STATEMENT." SPOKESMAN CONTINUED BY NOTING
IT COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT SUDANESE TERRITORY CONTINUES
TO BE USED OPENLY AS BASE OF OPERATION BY SECESSIONIST
ELEMENTS FROM ETHIOPIAN REGION OF ERITREA AS WELL AS
BY OTHER COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY GROUPS FROM HOSTILE ACTS
DIRECTED AGAINST ETHIOPIA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND
ON-GOING POPULAR REVOLUTION. ACTIVITIES THESE GROUPS
COULD NOT BE SECRET TO GOS, AS EPMG, ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS,
HAS BROUGHT IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE TO ATTENTION
OF APPROPRIATE LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES
OF GOS. SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH ACTIVITIES
CARRIED OUT IN ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY BY ELEMENTS OPERATING
FROM WITHIN SUDAN HAVE BEEN FREQUENT AND SERIOUS, EPMG
HAS FELT IT NOT IN INTEREST OF GOOD RELATIONS TO AIR
THEM PUBLICLY AND HAD ALWAYS HOPED RESOLVE ALL SUCH
CONTRAVENTIONS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. SPOKESMAN
CLOSED BY NOTING IN VIEW GOS KNOWLEDGE OF CONTINUOUS
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REPRESENTATIONS MADE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS
ABOUT THESE SERIOUS AND HOSTILE ACTIVITIES, EPMG IS
CONSTRAINED TO OBSERVE THAT ANY ALLEGATION OF THE KIND
ATTRIBUTED TO PRESIDENT OF GOS, ESPECIALLY AT TIME
WHEN THERE IS MARKED INCREASE IN THEIR OCCURRENCE, IS
DESIGNED SOLELY TO DETRACT ATTENTION FROM THEIR
SERIOUSNESS.

2. DEC. 30 HERALD EDITORIAL COVERED SAME GROUND, NOTING
IT PARTICULARLY PERPLEXING THAT ALLEGATIONS WERE MADE
BY CHIEF OF STATE. STATEMENT DID NOT SERVE ANYONE,
EXCEPT IN ADVERSELY AFFECTING RELATIONS BETWEEN
NEIGHBORLY STATES, AND RENDERING THEM A LAUGHING
STOCK OF THEIR COMMON ENEMIES. ETHIOPIA'S POSITION
CLEAR--EPMG PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH ALL COUNTRIES
WHO RESPECT ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND WHO DESIRE
TO PROMOTE COMMON INTERESTS. ETHIOPIA DOES NOT
WISH TO EXAGGERATE SERIOUSNESS OF CROSS BORDER INCIDENTS,

NOR DOES SHE WISH FOMENT TROUBLE WITH NEIGHBORLY STATES. IT IS ETHIOPIA'S STRONG DESIRE THAT OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES OR MISUNDERSTANDINGS BE DEALT WITH IN SYSTEMATIC AND DIPLOMATIC MATTER THROUGH BILATERAL TALKS.

3. LOCAL SUDANESE DIPLOMAT HAS ACKNOWLEDGED TO EMBOFF RAIDS BY SUDANESE AGAINST ANSAR CAMPS IN ETHIOPIA OCCURRED DURING NOVEMBER. HE DID NOT SPECIFY WHETHER THEY CONDUCTED BY REGULAR SUDANESE TROOPS OR IRREGULARS SUPPORTED BY SUDAN. HE HAD HEARD NOTHING OF NEW CAMPS BEING BUILT IN ETHIOPIA FOR ANSAR REFUGEES OR ABOUT MILITARY TRAINING OF ANSARS. EMBOFF ELARNED FROM LOCAL UNHCR OFFICE UN SUPPORT TO ANSAR CAMPS IN ILLUBABOR LIKELY TO BE DISCONTINUED END OF JANUARY, ALTHOUGH SOURCE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER SAME WOULD BE TRUE FOR ANSAR CAMPS IN METEMA AND HUMERA AREAS.

4. MAJOR DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES BY EDU AND DPRP IN
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BEGEMDIR PROVINCE DURING PAST MONTH APPEARED TO REQUIRE FULL ATTENTION OF EPMG MILITARY RESOURCES ALONG SOUTHERN SUDAN BORDER. OTHER DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES AGAINST EPMG IN SOUTHEASTERN AND NORTHERNMOST PROVINCES WOULD SEEM TO PRECLUDE ABILITY OF ETHIOPIANS TO PROVIDE ANY MAJOR ASSISTANCE TO POSSIBLE ANSAR ATTACKS.

5. CONVERSATIONS WITH USUALLY WELL INFORMED LOCAL EGYPTIAN, SOMALI AND SUDANESE DIPLOMATS AND OTHER INDEPENDENCE SOURCES HAVE PROVIDED NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF LIBYAN-ETHIOPIAN COOPERATION AGAINST SUDAN. RELIABLE MININT SOURCE HAS INFORMED EMBOFF THAT ONE NEW ANSAR CAMPT BUILT IN BEGEMDIR PROVINCE APPROXIMATELY THREEE AND ONE HALF MONTHS AGO IN SUPPORT OF ANSAR DISSIDENTS. DECISION WAS REPORTEDLY TAKEN AFTER EPMG RECEIVED EVIDENCE OF LIKE ACTIVITY BY GOS IN SUPPORT OF ERITREAN REBELS AND ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION. MOST CURRENT RUMOR IN ADDIS IS LIBYANS PROVIDING ARMS TO EPMG AND HALTING SUPPORT TO ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT (ELF) IN EXCHANGE FOR ETHIOPIAN SUPPORT OF LIBYAN INITIATIVES AGAINST NIMEIRI. HOWEVER, SOURCES ACKNOWLEDGE THIS ONLY RUMOR AND NOT BASED ON FACT.

6. COMMENT: WHILE EMBASSY NOT CERTAIN OF CAUSE FOR NIMEIRI SPEECH, SPECULATION IN ADDIS SEEMS TO CONCUR WITH EMBASSY KHARTOUM SUPPOSITION THAT MAXIMUM SUPPORT FOR REGIME PRIOR SSU TRIENNIAL CONGRESS IN JANUARY PRINCIPAL REASON. THERE ALSO SOME WONDERING AT NIMEIRI'S ABRUPT TURNABOUT FROM LEFT TO RIGHT AND SEE ACCUSATIONS OF "COMMUNIST FORCES" AS OPPORTUNISTIC

MEANS OF ESTABLISHING PRO-WESTERN AND PRO-SAUDI CREDENTIALS.
END COMMENT.
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